FINN • REIS • CAMPOS
ACTION
COMICS
No.824
APR 05
SUPERMAN
VS.
PREUS...
WINNER
TAKE
EARTH!
DIRECT SALES
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JUSTICE LEAGUE WATCHTOWER. THE MOON.
I MADE IT! YES! IT'S THE BIG TIME!
REPO MAN IN THE HOUSE! IS THIS HOW Y'ALL INITIATE NEW MEMBERS? DO I GET MY OWN ROOM UP HERE?
IF NOT, BUNK ME WITH GREEN LANTERN-- THE REAL ONE, NOT THE BLACK ONE--
I DIDN'T AGREE TO A MONITOR DUTY SHIFT TO BABY-SIT A REDNECKED IDIOT.
THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE.
YEAH, AN' YOU FINALLY GOT A REAL MAN UP HERE TO DO IT, POND-BOY!
MANHUNTER HAS NOT CHECKED IN FOR DAYS, BUT THE LEAGUE IS UNABLE TO SEARCH FOR HIM--
-- NOW THAT IT'S BEEN CONFIRMED DOOMSDAY IS ON THE LOOSE IN METROPOLIS, THEY'VE EVEN CALLED IN RESERVES.
TAKE YOUR IDIOT BACK HOME AND KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE. SUPERMAN? ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?
I used to have a dream. In it, Lois and I sit together on my parents' porch. The sun is setting. Lemonade growing warm...

We're old together, and it's wonderful.
"Together" is the operative word.
I know Arthur is speaking to me. I know it...but I can't listen, lost in the sound of my own skin tightening. My arteries shrinking.
When death becomes a reality, life becomes a lot more interesting.
SORRY. I NEEDED... I NEEDED A CHANCE TO CATCH MY BREATH, AQUAMAN.
FIVE MINUTES. I'LL TAKE OUR "PATIENT" TO S.T.A.R. LABS IN METROPOLIS... AND CHECK US BOTH IN BEFORE THIS GETS WORSE.
FORGIVE ME, SUPERMAN... I GET INDIGNANT WHEN I'M FRUSTRATED.
SEEING YOU LIKE THIS-- IF SURFACE MEDICINE FAILS YOU, REMEMBER THAT AN OCEAN OF POSSIBILITY IS AT YOUR COMMAND.
THANK YOU. AR-- NNGH
IS HE HAVIN' A STROKE? I WANT HIS CHAIR!
BE QUIET, DAMN YOU!! SUPERMAN?
I'M FINE... I HAVE TO LEAVE METROPOLIS TO THE LEAGUE FOR A MOMENT... JIMMY OLSEN'S IN TROUBLE...
I'M GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS... STUFF.
ZEEZEEZEE

GOD'S PEAKE...CURRENTLY THE MOST INAPTLY NAMED LOCATION IN AMERICA...
YES! I GOT IT... I'M THINKING AS LOUD AS I CAN, MISTER MANHUNTER... DO YOU HEAR ME? I ACTIVATED MY SIGNAL WATCH...
JIMMY...
SUPERMAN'S COMING! PREUS DOESN'T STAND A--
QUIET! H-HE CAN-- CAN--
ZEEZEEZEEZ...
AAAAAAGH!
I CAN HEAR YOU, TELEPATHIC FILTH...
SO, YOU CALL, HE COMES? EXCELLENT.

When was the last time I felt lightheaded trying to push the speed of sound?
Whatever Bog has done to me with that liquid Kryptonite trick, it's getting worse by the second...
Jimmy...I really hope you're mixed up with Kite-Man or someone equally harmless--
OH.

OLD MAN, NEW WORLD
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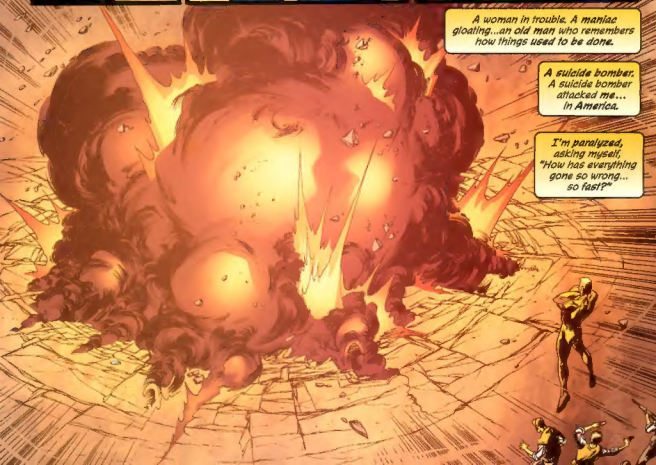
SUPERMAN
created by:
JERRY SIEGEL
& JOE SHUSTER
BY THE GRACE OF RAO...
...SHOW HIM THE LONG ROAD TO HELL.
ZEEZEE
ZEEZEE

Please...please let this be early Alzheimer's...
I cannot be hearing who I'm hearing...
KAL-EL YOU'RE LOOKING... BAD.
PREUS...
He's from Kandor. We have similar strengths under the light of the yellow sun. Similar make-ups.
But at this moment he's a third my age.
LOOK WHAT I FOUND. A MILITIA OF "LIKE-MINDED" INDIVIDUALS...IF SUCH A THING IS POSSIBLE AMONG INSECTS SUCH AS THESE.
YOU NEVER TOLD ME THAT PURITY OF RACE WAS SUCH A PRIORITY AMONG HUMAN BEINGS.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, PREUS. I DON'T CARE. I WANT JONN/--
--JIMMY. WHERE IS JIMMY OLSEN?
SUPERMAN! OH GOD! HELP ME!
HE'S CRAZY! HE WANTS TO KILL EVERYONE!

PATHETIC. SOMEONE MAKE IT STOP--
THE WOMEN GO INTO HIS TENT AND NEVER COME BACK--
HOLD ON. I'LL GET YOU SOMEPLACE SAFE, MISS--?
THERE IS NO PLACE SAFE--
FILTHY RACE TRAITOR!
FOR PREUS!!
I never checked. Of course I never checked.


A woman in trouble. A maniac gloating...an old man who remembers how things used to be done.
A suicide bomber. A suicide bomber attacked me... in America.
I'm paralyzed, asking myself, "How has everything gone so wrong... so fast?"

Almost paralyzed.
WHY?
Third degree burns. Both eardrums are shattered. Can't tell for certain, but I'd bet the farm she'll be blind.
But she's alive.
It's a small victory... immediately overshadowed by fear.
GOD NEEDS ANGELS IN A HOLY WAR.
AND HUMANS SO LIKE TO DIE, DON'T THEY?
Preus has found a way to hurt me. Not with bullets. Not with bombs--
CLEANSE HIM. CLEANSE HIM AS I WILL CLEANSE THIS EARTH.
FOR THE REAL SUPERMAN! YEAAAAAAGH!
He's throwing lives at me... and they come, ready to die...

I have never felt so old. So tired. So scared.
I DON'T LIKE THIS. HOW DOES DOOMSDAY DISAPPEAR?
I'M SCANNING THROUGH INFRARED, ULTRASOUND, ANTI-SEISMIC--WHEREVER HE'S HIDING, IT'S A DAMN GOOD SPOT.
NO.
DOOMSDAY DOES NOT HIDE.
NO, DOOMSDAY DOES NOT HIDE... USUALLY.
NOR DOES HE THINK... USUALLY...NOR DOES HE FEEL...
USUALLY.
BUT TODAY, DOOMSDAY HAS CHOSEN TO EXPLORE THE BOUNDARIES OF A NEWFOUND INTELLECT. INVESTIGATE ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES... NEW EMOTIONS.
WATCHING JLA RESERVISTS, DOOMSDAY IS FASCINATED TO DISCOVER A NEW FEELING WHEN HE REALIZES THAT SUPERMAN HAS YET TO APPEAR...
JEALOUSY.

The bullets hurt, but they don't pierce my skin. Even if they did, it would be nothing compared to what's attacking my heart.
The hate. So blind, so self-destructive. They'll kill each other just to scratch me.
HE'S NOT OUR SUPERMAN! NOT AMERICA'S SUPERMAN!
STOP IT! YOU'RE KILLING EACH OTHER!!
Preus laughs as I try to fly but collapse under their weight.
Something my father once said hits me square in the jaw...
"I'd like to meet the man who coined the term 'the golden years' so I can beat him senseless with my walker."

At least I'm still able to leap small armies in a single bound...
COWARD! HE CAN'T STAND UP T' THE PEOPLE'S ARMY- !
UH... WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
STAY DOWN!
It's significant, the tremor. Enough to stun them, but not much else.

They don't get the hint.
I want them to stop killing each other with those guns. I want them to see the folly of following Prelus...
Stealing a page from the "Art of Violence by Bruce Wayne" I get what I want.
And it terrifies me.
FEELS GOOD DOESN'T IT? TO HURT THEM.
THEY AREN'T VERY GOOD FOR MUCH ELSE. LIKE KICKING A DOG AFTER A BAD DAY.
AND YOU HAVE CLEARLY HAD A BAD DAY.
ARE YOU AWARE YOU ARE ABOUT TO HAVE A HEART ATTACK?
No because my breathing is so heavy I can't hear anything else.

WHY?!? WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS, PREUS?
I WAS TESTING THEM.
THEY FAILED.
THEIR LITTLE MINDS ARE AS SOFT AS THEIR LITTLE BODIES... THEY ARE FODDER FOR THE CLEANSING...
BUT CANNOT BE MY ARMY.

THOUGH NOW--
YEAAAAGH!
I'M NOT SURE I NEED AN ARMY ANY LONGER.
Pain...pain tearing through my arm, radiating out of my chest...
Rao...I think he was right...
I'm having a heart attack.
"S SUPERMAN?
NO.
SORRY, PAL
ARM
A-ARM
...OR...
...HEART...

DO YOU SEE IT YET, KAL-EL?
I AM THE FUTURE, AND THE FUTURE IS CLEAN.
Time for another page from Bruce's book... mind over might.
I've been doing this a hell of a lot longer than he has, and it's time I acted like it.
When you first learn to fly, the "body follows the eyes."
NNGH--
Similar power. Similar weaknesses ..
I got a better one..

A real "oldie but goodie..."
YOU MUST BE ABLE TO HEAR YOUR OWN HEART, KAL-EL. HOW LONG WILL YOU RESIST BEFORE IT EXPLODES?
IF I'M GOING TO DIE, PREUS, I WON'T BE ALONE.
My heart skips two beats. There is no doubt in my mind that if this gambit doesn't pay off big...
The Kryptonite will kill me.
YOU'RE A FOOL.
YAAAAGH!
He's immune to kryptonite.
I am going to die.

THIS IS EVOLUTION, KAL-EL. I AM GOING TO SUCCEED WHERE WE FAILED IN KANDOR--BOUND BY OUTDATED PRECEPTS OF MORALITY... YOUR SO-CALLED "LAW."
WHEN THIS PLACE IS CLEAN, I WILL CALL IT NEW KRYPTON...
KAL
THE ARM...OR--ARMOR NEAR HEART...

AND I WILL RESTORE HONOR TO THOSE WHO DIED SO THAT YOU COULD BETRAY THEM.
Heart... armor.
SKLITSCHH
Thanks, J'onn.
For the moment, my heartbeat returns to normal...
But Prexus's stops.

"YOU CAN HANDLE THINGS HERE, J'ONN?"
"SUPERMAN, THIS IS MADNESS. LEAVE HIM. YOU'RE IN NO CONDITION--"
"DON'T. DON'T TELL ME WHAT CONDITION I'M IN..
"IF I AM GOING TO DIE...I AM NOT GOING TO DIE A MURDERER. CALL ARTHUR. TELL HIM TO BRING HELP
"I'M GOING TO S.T.A.R. LABS. IF I'M CRAZY ENOUGH TO THINK THEY CAN HELP ME...
"I HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN SAVE PREUS."
"AND IF THEY DO? DOOMSDAY IS THERE!"
"S.T.A.R. HAS RED SUNLIGHT GENERATORS. PREUS WON'T BE ABLE TO HELP DOOMSDAY...
"AND ALL OF THE AVAILABLE LEAGUERS ARE ALREADY THERE. DON'T WORRY, J'ONN..
"TAKE CARE OF JIMMY. KEEP THE MILITIA IN CHECK.
"LET ME HANDLE MY PROBLEMS.

MY PROBLEM HAS ALWAYS BEEN *IMPATIENCE*. IT HAS BEEN MY UNDOING *THROUGHOUT TIME*.
PWHAMMMMMMM
UNTIL *NOW*
ONE MORE, OLD MAN--
THIS TIME, I THOUGHT IT THROUGH
ONE
I CHOSE MY ALLIES *WISELY*. I WAITED. *PLANNED*...

AND THE DAY IS *MINE.*
MOVE.
MOVE.
S-SUPERMAN...? G-GET UP...
HIS *WEAKEST DAY.*
RUN.
HE'S HERE FOR... YOU.
THE DAY WHEN ALL THINGS *CHANGE.*
AND THIS TIME AROUND...

NOTHING WILL TURN US BACK...
FINISH IT.
TO BE CONCLUDED.

03.05

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This Month's Cover by...
IAN CHURCHILL

"A story three years in the making."
— VP-Executive Editor DAN DIDIO

Next Month in... Action Comics #825

Special extra-sized issue! Superman fights Grig, and the fate of Metropolis hangs in the balance. And what role does Doomsday play in all of this? By Finn, Reis, Campos and Major.

DC COUNTDOWN (March 2005): Today's hottest comics creators – writers **Geoff Johns**, **Greg Rucka**, and **Judd Winick**, plus artists **Rags Morales**, **Ed Benes**, **Ivan Reis**, **Phil Jimenez**, and **Jesus Saiz** – band together for an incredible 80-page spectacular that reveals a mystery brewing since the end of IDENTITY CRISIS! With a cover pencilled by **Jim Lee** and painted by **Alex Ross**, DC COUNTDOWN is the perfect jumping-on point for readers, and all for the unbelievable low price of *one dollar*! Set your watches, starting *now*!

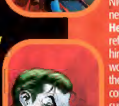
The Hot List THIS WEEK

ACTION COMICS #824

It's Superman versus Preus, with the fate of the world hanging in the balance! Plus, find out what Doomsday has been up to as he hunts for the Man of Steel!

BATMAN: THE MAN WHO LAUGHS

Acclaimed writer Ed Brubaker joins forces with fan-favorite artist Doug Mahnke for a Prestige Format Special that tells the tale of the Dark Knight's first battle against his eventual archnemesis: The Joker!



BREACH #2

The intriguing new series continues as Breach struggles to adjust to his transformation. But his awakening has not gone unnoticed and, on the plains of Africa, someone — or something — is coming for him!

"ROGUE WAR" DECLARED ON THE FLASH

After catching up with the FLASH creative team of **Geoff Johns**, **Howard Porter**, and **Livesay** recently, we expect the Fastest Man Alive to run himself ragged next month, in the first part of a six-part Rogue epic. The new Captain Boomerang (introduced in IDENTITY CRISIS), Captain Cold, and the Trickster are just a few of the Rogues choosing sides and waging war against each other in FLASH #220, and their conflict will doubtlessly have a profound effect on the Fastest Man Alive and his loved ones…especially when a third party decides to *zoom* in with a major strike of his own!

NIGHTWING GETS CONNECTED

After crafting an unbelievably rough year for NIGHTWING, **Devin Grayson** is making an offer neither our hero nor the new art team of **Phil Hester** and **Ande Parks** (GREEN ARROW) can refuse. Starting with issue #107, Dick Grayson finds himself working deep within the New York underworld, for some extremely not-so-goodfellas! And as the day-to-day hassles of dealing with lowlifes and contract hit men start to pile up, so does the list of super-villains and heroes looking to take him down! Needless to say, expect a mob in comics shops this April!

MORALES, BAIR HEAT UP WONDER WOMAN

Following IDENTITY CRISIS, one could understand why the white-hot art tandem of **Rags Morales** and **Michael Bair** might have wanted to plan some vacation time. However, their travel brochures are pointed in only one direction – onto WONDER WOMAN and straight into Hell! Starting as the series' new regular art team with issue #215, Rags and Michael join Wonder Scribe **Greg Rucka** – who has already blinded our poor Lady Di and put her into battle against the JLA – in sending the Amazing Amazon and the Teen Titans' Wonder Girl to the Land of the Dead! And if we're lucky, they may even locate the whereabouts of another character from Diana's past!

NEW MEMBERS OF THE SUPERMAN FAMILY

Our super-hearing's catching all the buzz regarding creative changes for the Super-books this May. We're especially excited that BIRDS OF PREY writer **Gail Simone** will join Super-star penciller **John Byrne** on his return to the pages of ACTION COMICS, while **Greg Rucka** and THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN enjoy a MAJESTIC influence with new series artist **Karl Kerschl**! And sure, **Brian Azzarello** and **Jim Lee** are a tough act to follow on SUPERMAN, but guys like **Mark Verheiden**, the former supervising producer who handled young Clark Kent's adventures on the megahit WB! Series *Smallville*, and **Ed Benes**, whose art soared in BIRDS OF PREY, are ready for the challenge. We're also hearing about bigger and badder threats to appear, as well as a major crossover in July that will have Super-fans everywhere up in arms! Don't say we didn't warn ya!

– your MOLE at 1700

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A MODEST SCAN BY JOHNNYSWIFT
DON'T FALL INTO VILLAINY!
PREUS...
AND NOW LET'S JOIN THE VILLAIN IN QUESTION..., DR. THADDEUS BODOG BWANA...
HEH, HEH, HEH! I KNOW I COULD HAVE BOUGHT A COPY OF THIS, BUT I PREFER TO STEAL!
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